

# Strategies to Promote Use of Program Assessment Results at Institutional Level

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**Audience Level:** Intermediate and Advanced

**Main Topic:** Use of results

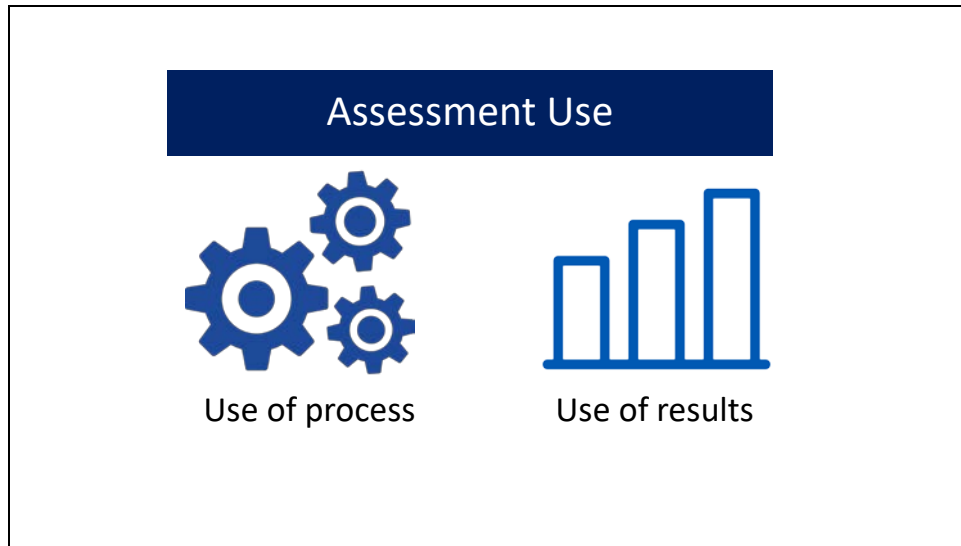
**Abstract:**

Meaningful program assessment entails that faculty collaboratively use assessment process and results for program improvement. Meaningful and skillful use-of-assessment requires institutional support. This presentation offers such support strategies in a large public research university, which include: assessment report synthesis and presentation, showcasing (e.g., awards, workshop training, map-of-excellence), offering data presentation and discussion facilitation strategies, packaging low-hanging fruit options, and building grassroots leaders.



The Assessment Office at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa was established in 2008 based on the faculty senate recommendation. It reports to both faculty senate and the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs. There are two faculty specialists currently in the office to carry out the mission of the office, which is to use program learning outcomes assessment to improve teaching and learning.

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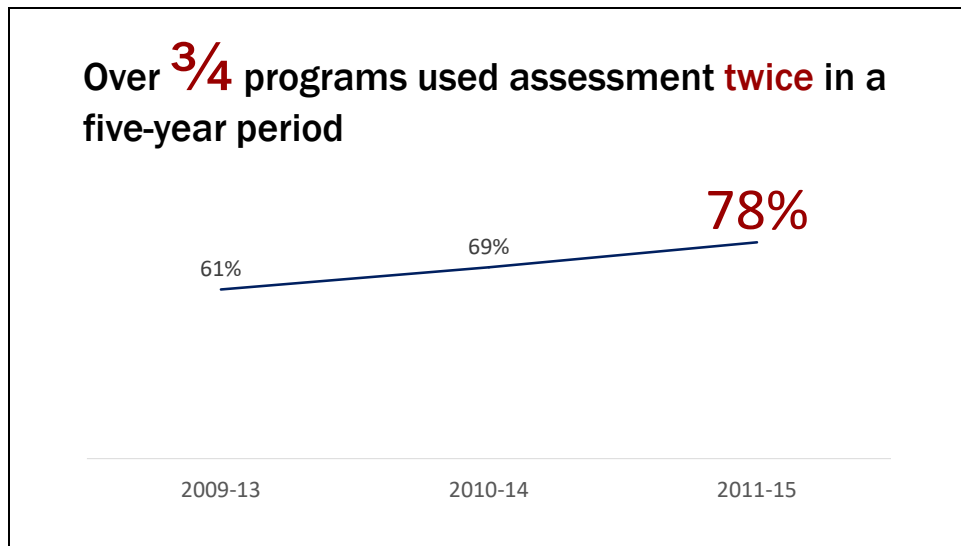
I define assessment use as (1) use of learning assessment process—using discussions and discoveries during the process of learning assessment for making programmatic changes and (2) use of assessment results.

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The University of Hawai'i at Mānoa has about 240 academic degree programs. All of these programs need to demonstrate using assessment for improvement.

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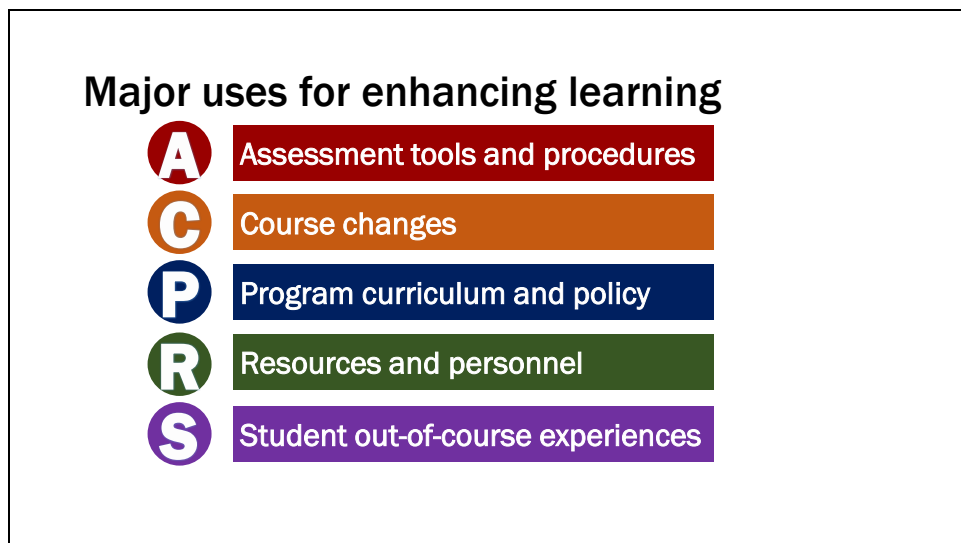


We observed an increased use-of-assessment through analyzing the Program Assessment Reports. The most recent five-year analysis showed that over  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the programs claimed that they had used assessment twice in a five-year period.

Data: 2015 Annual Program Assessment Reports

Sample: 151 reports from 164 programs that claimed use of assessment

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For those programs that have used the assessment to enhance learning, I identified five major categories of use.

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## Examples


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## Course Changes




## Classroom Activities



### Integrate writing workshops in classes

- Reading Notes
- Prewriting
- Writing as Performance
- Writing for Different Audiences/Purposes

- Book Reviews
- Film Reviews
- Grant Proposals
- Reflection Papers
- Research Papers
- Citations and Visuals



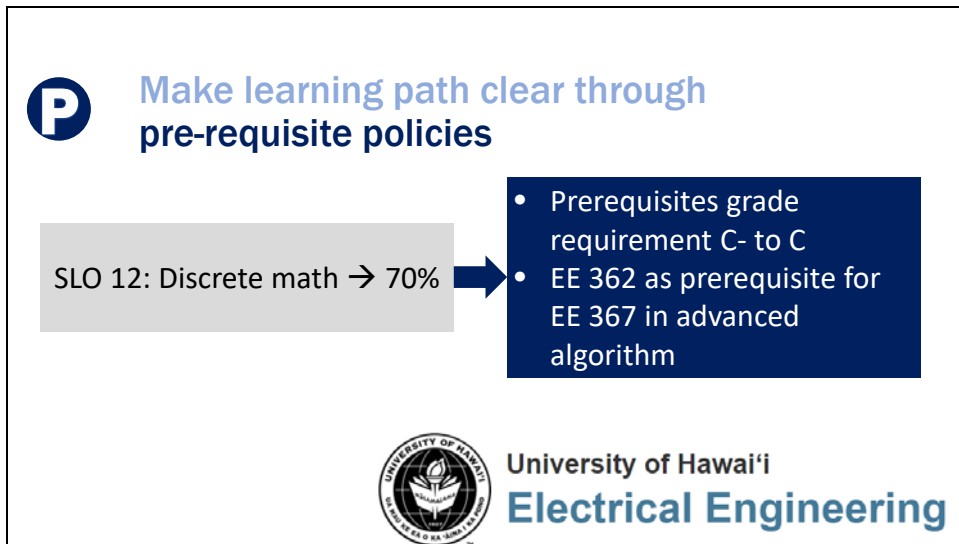
Pacific Islands Studies found their students' writing not meeting their program expectations in their first round of assessment. They developed writing workshop modules to be integrated into individual courses. A graduate assistant and a writing expert would deliver these modules into individual faculty members' courses. Some course instructors, after going through the workshop with their students, started teaching the workshop themselves. The program improved student writing and faculty's ability to teach writing.

Link to their poster:

<https://manoa.hawaii.edu/assessment/workshops/poster2016/2016PacificIslandsStudies.pdf>



## Program Curriculum & Policy Changes



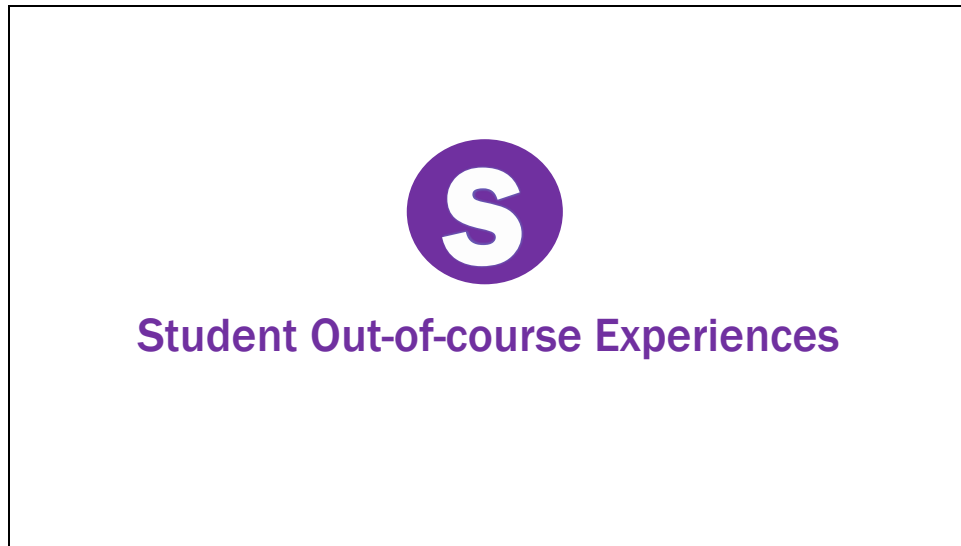
The Electrical Engineering BS 2015 Report showed that the achievement in SLO 12: Discrete Math was the lowest at 70% in comparison with the other outcome achievements. To increase this outcome achievement, the department took many actions:

- They required the students to get a C instead of C- in a pre-requisite course to become a major.
- They created a new course EE362 that covers the materials in both the introductory generic Discrete Math course in ICS 141 and the next level Discrete Math course in ICS 241. This new course was designed specifically to solve engineering programs, rather than generic math problems. The program also made EE362 a pre-requisite for an advanced computer algorithms course EE367.

Link to their 2015 Assessment Report:

<https://manoa.hawaii.edu/assessment/update2/view.php?view=1513>

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A presentation slide with a white background. On the left, there is a purple circle with a white 'S' logo, followed by the text "Resources for students" in purple. Below this, the text "Student Handbook" is in black, and "Ch 5: Resources (e.g., developing a hypothesis)" is in purple. In the top right corner, there is a small thumbnail image of a document. At the bottom, there is a green circular logo of the University of Hawaii, followed by the text "Molecular Biosciences and Bioengineering" in green, and "College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources" in a smaller green font.

**S** Resources for students

Student Handbook

Ch 5: Resources (e.g., developing a hypothesis)

 **Molecular Biosciences and Bioengineering**  
College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources

Molecular Biosciences and Bioengineering found that their Ph.D. students were relatively weak in developing research hypotheses when the faculty evaluated the students' dissertation proposals. In their revised student handbook, they included a resource section. "Developing a hypothesis" is included in the resource section to support students.

Link to their poster:

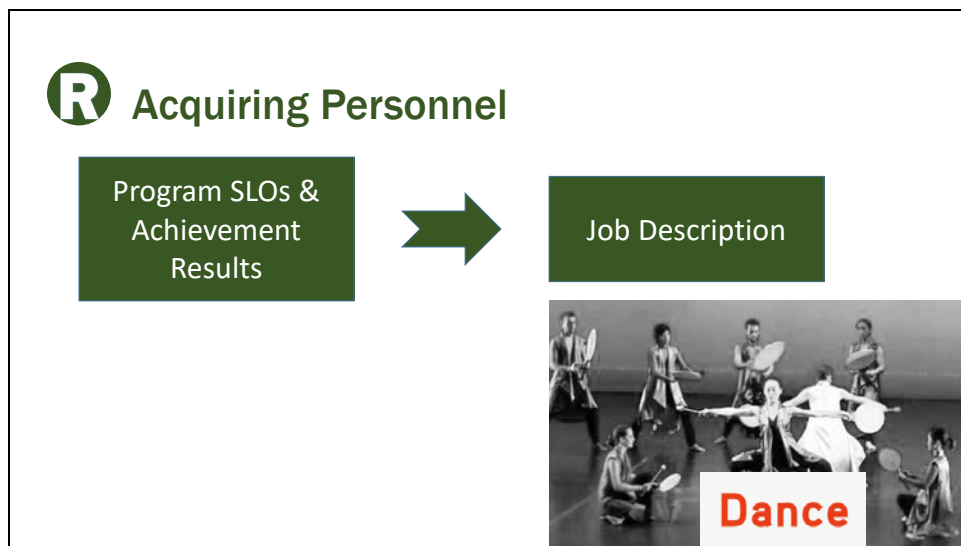
<http://manoa.hawaii.edu/assessment/workshops/poster2016/2016MBBE.pdf>



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When a faculty retired, the Dance BA program examined their program SLOs and the achievement results. They rewrote the job description to recruit a faculty in the areas of their students' learning needs and filled a gap of the curriculum.

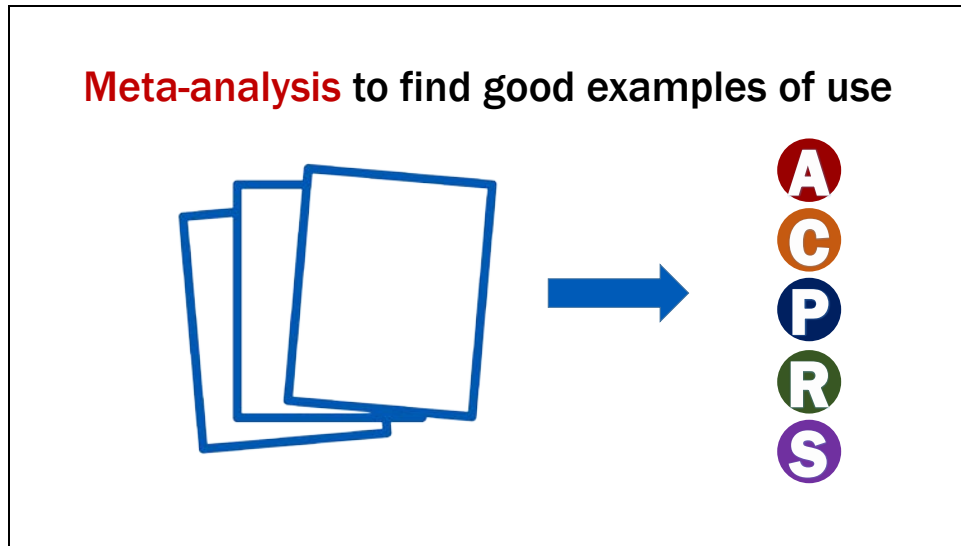
Link to 2015 Assessment Report:

<https://manoa.hawaii.edu/assessment/update2/view.php?view=1492>

## Major uses for enhancing learning

- A** Assessment tools and procedures
- C** Course changes
- P** Program curriculum and policy
- R** Resources and personnel
- S** Student out-of-course experiences

## Strategies to promote use



First is to conduct meta-analysis of assessment reports or existing documents to understand how the programs on campus have used the results.

**UH Mānoa Ways of Using Program Assessment Processes and Results**

**Course Changes**

- ☐ a) Content coverage ([NREM, Biology](#))
- ☐ b) (Signature) Assignment ([Chinese](#))
- ☐ c) Classroom activities/materials ([Pacific Islands Studies, Education Foundations, English](#))
- ☐ d) General Education designation ([Pacific Islands Studies, MBBE](#))
- ☐ f) Course title & description change ([Curriculum Studies, Dance](#))
- ☐ g) Delete/combine courses ([American Studies](#))
- ☐ h) Develop a new course ([Public Administration](#))

**Curriculum Changes**

- a) Make learning path clear
  - ☐ Add pre-requisite(s)/co-requisite(s) ([Computer Engineering, Education Psychology](#))
  - ☐ Mandate a course-taking sequence ([Academy for Creative Media](#))
- b) Enhance learning opportunities
  - ☐ Increase course offerings (sections/frequency) ([Japanese, Public Health](#))
  - ☐ Increase course repeat limit (e.g., internship, practicum) ([Professional Educational Practice](#))
- c) Clearly align the curriculum with the program SLOs
  - ☐ Examine curriculum coherence ([Second Language Studies](#))
  - ☐ Create/restructure curriculum ([Academy for Creative Media](#))

I also identified the subcategories under each major use category, located examples, and provided links to their assessment reports.

**Best Examples of Use-of-Assessment from the 2015 Assessment Reports**

**Report features:**

- Actions are meaningful for learning improvement. Actions are clearly aligned with the results.
- There is careful deliberation of reasons behind actions.

**List of Programs**


Program Name(s)	Report ID	Assessment	Course	Program	Resource/Personnel	Student Support	Celebration
American Studies (BA)	1561	✓	✓			✓	
Asian Studies (MA)	1470		✓				
Biological Engineering (BS)	1525	✓	✓			✓	
Chinese (BA)	1565	✓	✓			✓	
Communication (MA)	1368	✓	✓			✓	✓
Computer Engineering (BS)	1514		✓	✓			
Computer Science (BS), Info & Comp Sci (BA)	1425		✓				
Creative Media (BA)	1570			✓			
Curriculum Studies (MEd)	1388		✓			✓	✓
Dance (MA, MFA)	1492	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Early Childhood Education (MEd)	1360	✓		✓		✓	✓

For the programs who claimed that they have used the results, I created a matrix showing how they have used the results.

**Communicate and showcase**

**Use of Program  
Assessment Results:**  
Best Examples from UH Mānoa

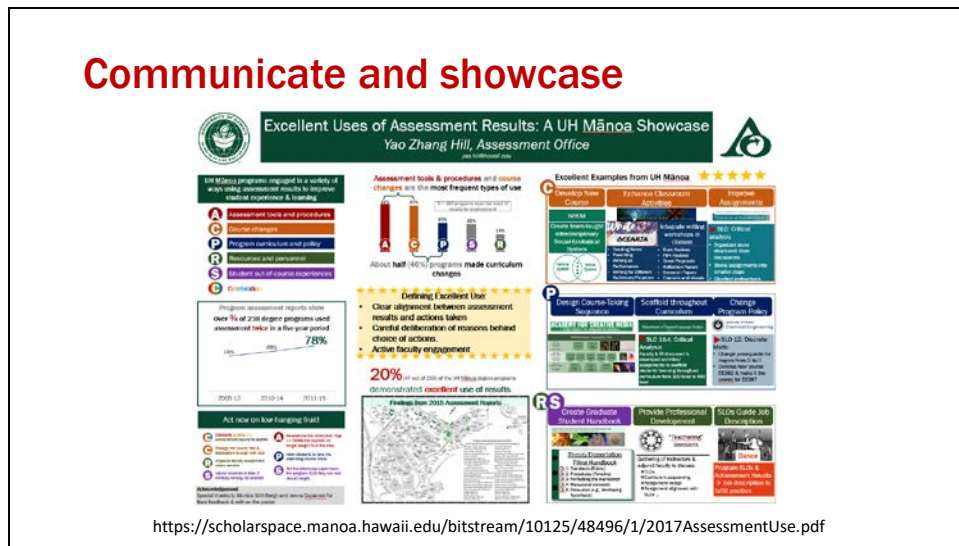
**Yao Zhang Hill, Ph.D.**  
Assistant Specialist  
Assessment Office



[https://scholarspace.manoa.hawaii.edu/bitstream/10125/48501/1/Hill2016Use\\_of\\_Program\\_Assessment\\_Results\\_Best\\_Ex\\_from\\_UH\\_PPT\\_Handout.pdf](https://scholarspace.manoa.hawaii.edu/bitstream/10125/48501/1/Hill2016Use_of_Program_Assessment_Results_Best_Ex_from_UH_PPT_Handout.pdf)

I offered a workshop illustrating real life examples to assessment coordinators on campus. The workshop handout is available online:  
[https://scholarspace.manoa.hawaii.edu/bitstream/10125/48501/1/Hill2016Use\\_of\\_Program\\_Assessment\\_Results\\_Best\\_Ex\\_from\\_UH\\_PPT\\_Handout.pdf](https://scholarspace.manoa.hawaii.edu/bitstream/10125/48501/1/Hill2016Use_of_Program_Assessment_Results_Best_Ex_from_UH_PPT_Handout.pdf)

## Communicate and showcase

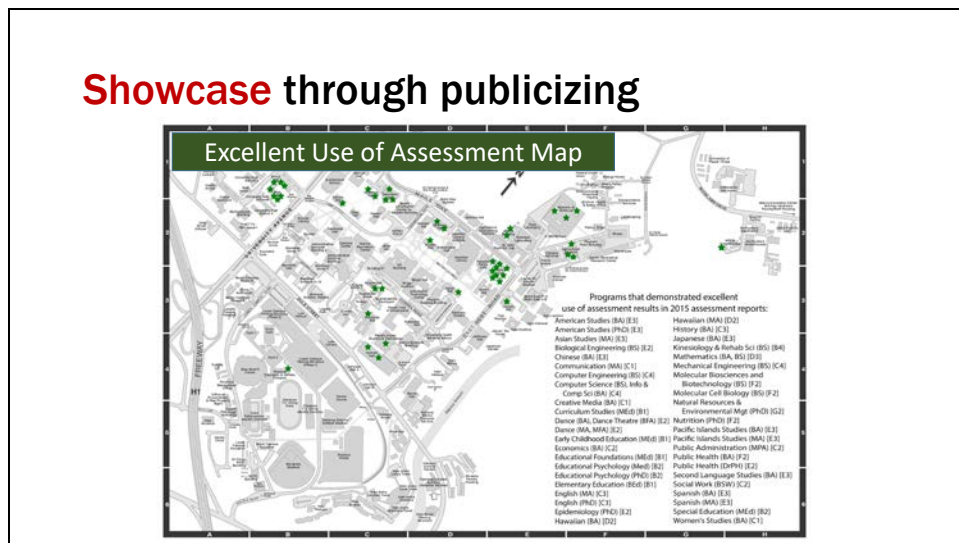


I made a poster to describe the use-of-assessment status, defined “excellent use” and showcased 9 programs in our campus-wide assessment poster exhibit. I was intentional in telling the stories of the excellent programs to the campus leaders who attended the poster event.

Link to the poster is here:

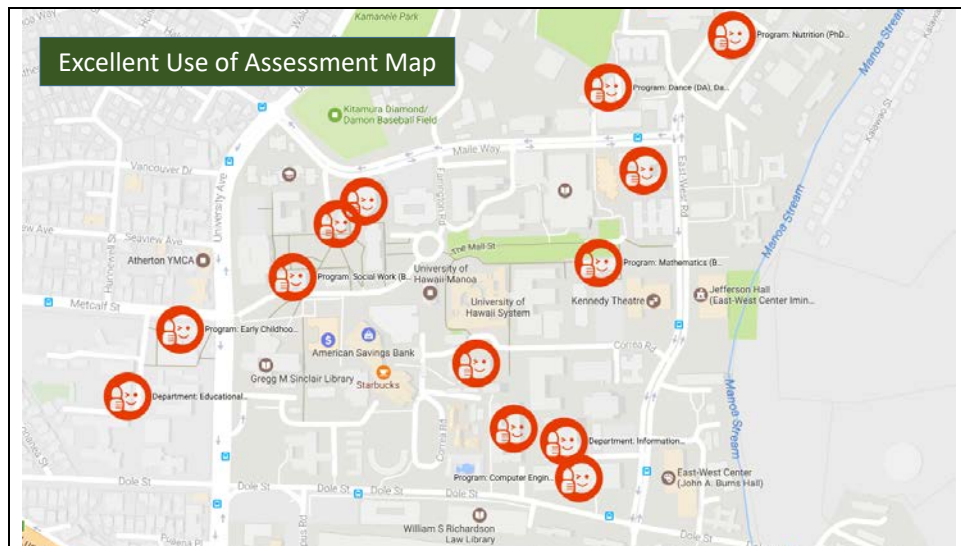
<https://scholarspace.manoa.hawaii.edu/bitstream/10125/48496/1/2017AssessmentUse.pdf>

## Showcase through publicizing



In addition, we created an excellent use-of-assessment map to recognize excellent programs and generate peer pressure. This also appears on the poster above.

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I also put the programs on the google map to let the world know about their good work!

Link to the google map: <https://www.google.com/maps/@21.2995327,-157.8194624,15z/data=!4m2!6m1!1s1T4WRAsB2-s1gkJkLC29Ak2gdiiw?hl=en>

(Note: One needs to use Hawai'i.edu account to log in and then see the map)

## Showcase through scholarship

### Assessment for Curricular Improvement Poster Exhibit



In addition to my telling the stories, I provide opportunities for the programs to tell their own stories. Our office organizes the Assessment for Curricular Improvement Poster Exhibit almost every year. We want to highlight the programs that have done an excellent job in program assessment. We also use the events to promote assessment scholarship.

The Poster Exhibit site is here: <http://manoa.hawaii.edu/assessment/poster/index.htm>

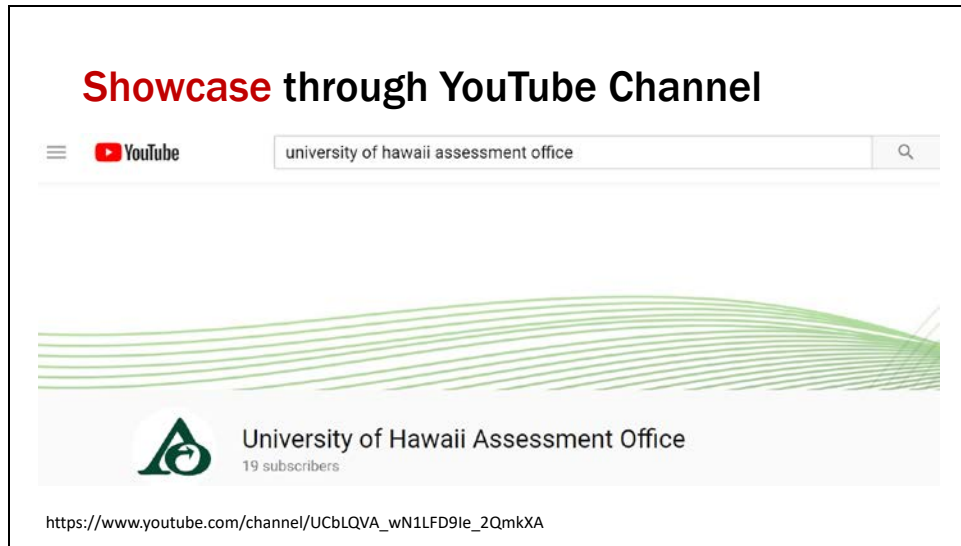
## Showcase through awards



Each poster also has an opportunity to win one of the three awards: (1) Best use of results; (2) Best faculty engagement strategies; (3) Best design



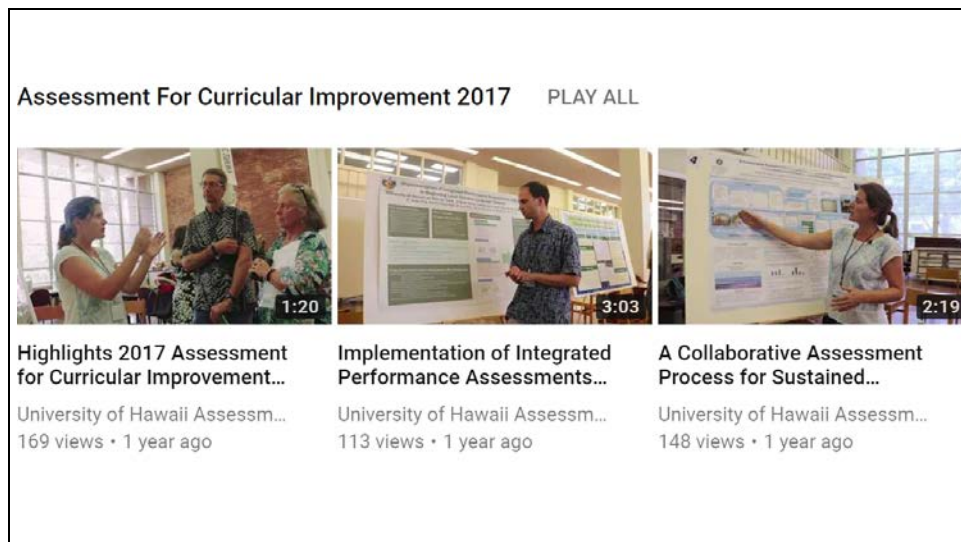
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We promote program voices on our YouTube channel.

[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCbLQVA\\_wN1LFD9Ie\\_2QmkXA](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCbLQVA_wN1LFD9Ie_2QmkXA)

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Several poster presenters gave short presentations about their work. We uploaded them onto our YouTube channel.



### Package low-hanging fruit

<b>C</b>	Celebrate & send the achievement results to alumni	<b>A</b>	Re-examine the curriculum map -> Delete the courses no longer taught from the map
<b>C</b>	Change the course title & description to align with SLO	<b>P</b>	Allow students to take the internship course twice.
<b>R</b>	Organize faculty assignment share session	<b>S</b>	Tell the internship supervisors the program SLOs they can and should target.
<b>S</b>	Advise students to take 2 method/writing/OC courses		

In addition to showcasing, I compiled a set of low-hanging fruit options for the programs that just started to establish a culture of using assessment for improvement.

### Training

**Facilitating Use of Program  
Assessment Results  
for Program Improvement**

Facilitator: Yao Hill, Ph.D.  
Assistant Specialist  
Assessment Office

[http://manoa.hawaii.edu/assessment/workshops/pdf/facilitating\\_use\\_2015-11.pdf](http://manoa.hawaii.edu/assessment/workshops/pdf/facilitating_use_2015-11.pdf)

I gave a workshop on facilitating use of program assessment results for program assessment coordinators.

## Use intriguing result presentation



In the workshop, I try to convey data presentation principles so that the results are:

- Emotional engaging
- Personally relevant
- Intellectually challenging

Presenting the results does not have to be boring. We can use games and fun activities.

Source for the image: <http://yinyangmother.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/464679367.jpg>

### Re-evaluate the curriculum map with results

Courses	SLO 1 Knowledge 85%	SLO 2 Critical thinking 75%	SLO 3 Research 70%	SLO 4 Written Comm. 60%
Course 101	X			
Course 102	X	X	X	
Course 201		X	X	
Course 202	X	X		X
...	X	X	X	
Capstone	X	X	X	X

Presenting your results in the curriculum map is intellectually challenging and can be personally relevant. The yellow numbers on the curriculum map represent the percentage of students who achieved a particular learning outcome. The curriculum map itself provides information to diagnose the results. Look at this curriculum map, why do you think the achievement on written communication is low? If you were the faculty members in this program, what would you suggest to improve students' writing?

As assessment field starts to advocate the use of embedded assessment where program assessment data collection is done in individual courses, it is more imperative for faculty members to collaborate in data interpretation. Looking at the assessment results in light of the curriculum reinforces the concept that learning is a collaborative responsibility of the faculty and is best achieved as a result of a quality curriculum as a whole.

**III. Curriculum Map Revaluation**

**Level of Difficulty:** Medium

**Estimated time:** 60 minutes

**Purpose:**

1. Review the curriculum coherence in light of results.
2. To identify gaps, overlaps, mismatches in the curriculum.
3. To engage faculty's expertise and experience in teaching.

**Logistics:**

A handout of the program SLOs and curriculum map.

A curriculum map displayed on flipchart paper or on a projector screen.

Post-its or recording faculty discussion on computer.

**Activity:**

In the workshop, I provided a handout, which details the logistics and steps to carry out the facilitation task.



Another strategy for facilitating use-of-assessment discussion is to ask faculty to share strategies to help students succeed. Faculty members are not only experts in their research areas; they also have experience and expertise in teaching. Peer sharing is a very feasible yet powerful way of improving teaching. The rhetoric is not “how to improve teaching” which puts faculty in a defensive position. Rather, it is “how to help students succeed” which empowers the faculty.

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**IV. Help Students Succeed Pair/Small Group Discussion**

**Level of Difficulty:** Medium

**Estimated time:** 45-60 minutes

**Purpose:**

1. Focus faculty's attention on student products as both a learning opportunity and evidence.
2. For individual faculty to improve learning activities in their courses to help students succeed.
3. To engage faculty's expertise and experience in teaching.

**Logistics:**

A handout of the program SLOs, curriculum map with printed results, and activity instructions.  
Papers or handouts for faculty to take notes.  
Flipchart papers/board/projector to capture faculty's ideas.

**Activity:**

1. Introduce the purpose of the activity and break faculty into small groups and make sure at least one faculty is teaching a course that's on the curriculum map. (2 min)  
*"Good morning! Thank you for coming to this meeting to discuss using assessment results."*

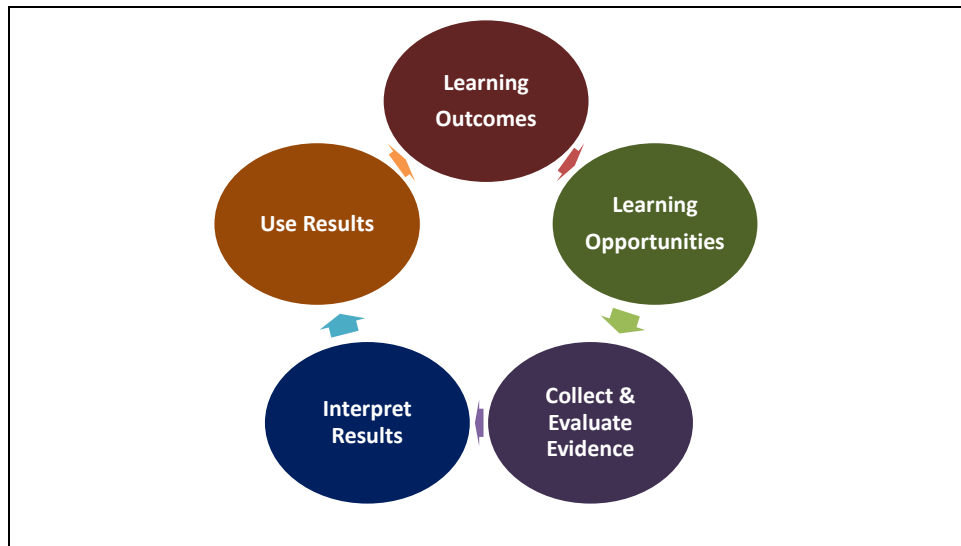
Again, I provided the handout on how to prepare for facilitating this activity.

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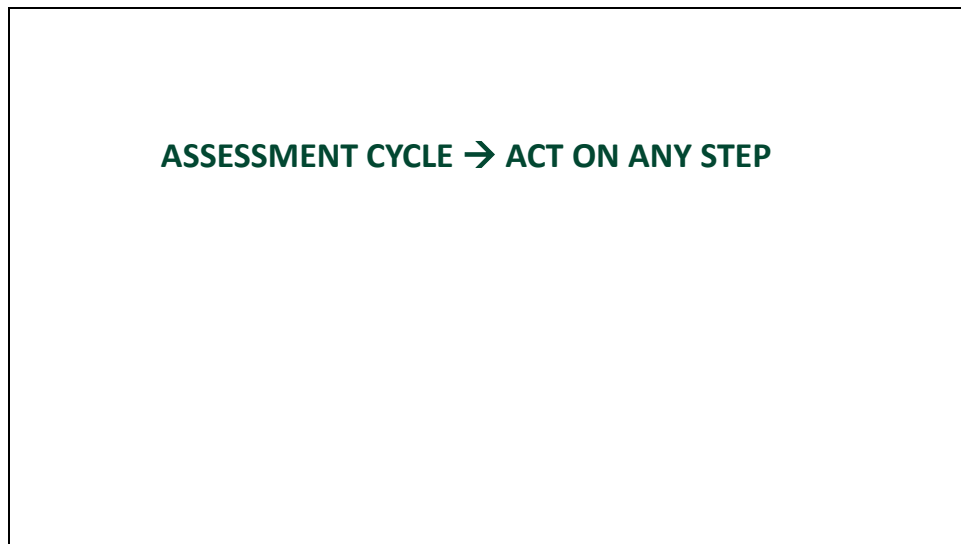
Another strategy to promote use of assessment results is to cultivate assessment leaders, who in turn can engage faculty in meaningful and relevant assessment activities in their own programs. At UH Mānoa, our office hosts Assessment Leadership Institute every year. Participants go through a three-day training on assessment and facilitation skills. They meet in follow-up support group meetings for a semester and present their assessment projects at the campus poster exhibit. These grassroots leaders are fundamental to the assessment cultural changes in their respective units.

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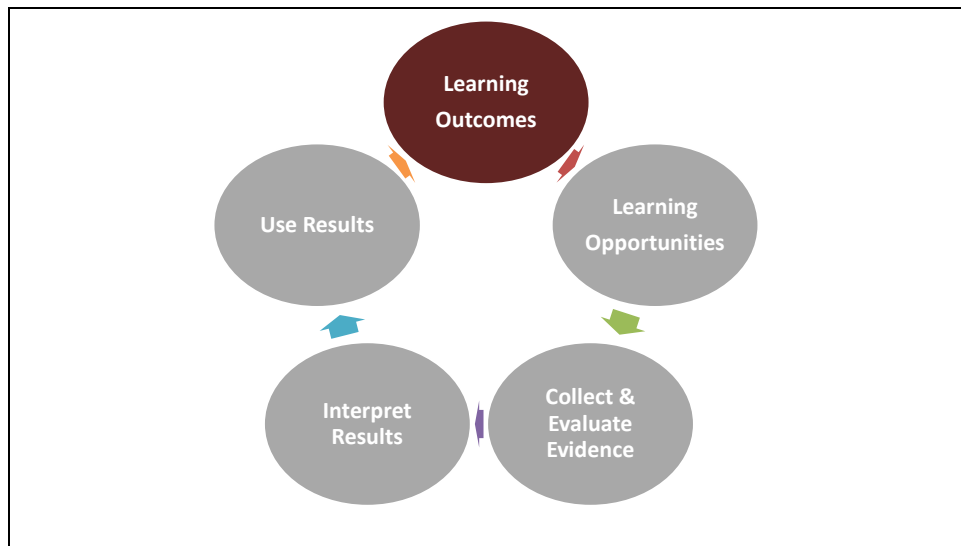
The training topics evolve around how to facilitate different steps in the assessment cycle.

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We pay attention to building the mindset that assessment can be used at any step. There is no need to wait until the results come out to begin to act and improve.

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For example, after introducing the topic of student learning outcomes, we gave examples on how other programs had used this process in program improvement.

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Identify key content topics for core courses

Biology SLO 1: explain biological processes from  
**molecules** to **ecosystems** in an **evolutionary** context

**Key Content Topics Identified for  
Upper Division Courses**

- Cell & Molecular Biology
- Physiology
- Morphology and Biodiversity
- Evolution
- Ecology

<http://manoa.hawaii.edu/assessment/workshops/poster2016/2016Biology.pdf>

When Biology BS program were creating their own upper division courses, they used their program SLOs to narrow down the topics to be covered. The few focused topics provided students with deeper learning opportunities and a better chance to achieve the learning outcomes.

**Make Assessment Feasible**  
Consolidating competencies to program SLOs

Kinesiology and Rehabilitation Science (MS)

**139** Competencies → **12** PLOs

Public Administration (MPA)  
Dental Hygiene (BS)  
Communication Sciences and Disorders (MS)

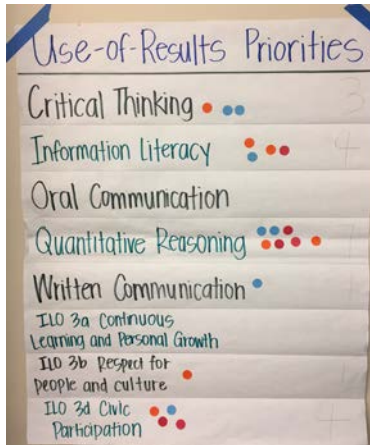
Many professionally accredited programs have numerous number of competencies required by their accreditation agency. Collaborating with faculty in narrowing/grouping the competencies into a manageable number of SLOs makes the assessment work more feasible and helps the programs to establish their own vision and identity.

KRS poster:

<http://manoa.hawaii.edu/assessment/workshops/poster2015/2015RehabilitationCounseling.pdf>



## Facilitate use-of-results yourself



Of course, we, as the assessment professional at the institutional level, should engage in facilitating use-of-results ourselves.

The strategies that I use include:

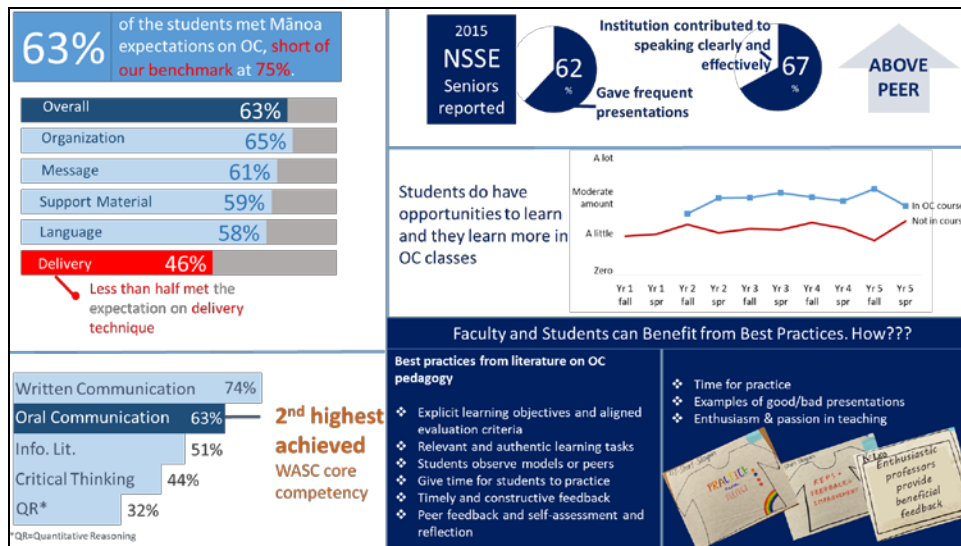
- Send out the results before the meeting. Keep the main findings clear and simple.
- Only use 5-10 minutes to go over the results.
- Immediately engage the committee in the discussion of how to use the results after data presentation.

For example, I conducted the analysis of the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) results related to our institutional learning objectives. During the meeting with the Institutional Learning Objectives Implementation Committee, I briefly summarized the results, and asked the committee to rank the ILOs in the order that we want to improve. I provided some guidelines in their prioritization task:

- Think about the low achieving outcomes
- Locate the movers and shakers on the campus who are willing to lead actions.
- Identify possible resources for the actions to happen.

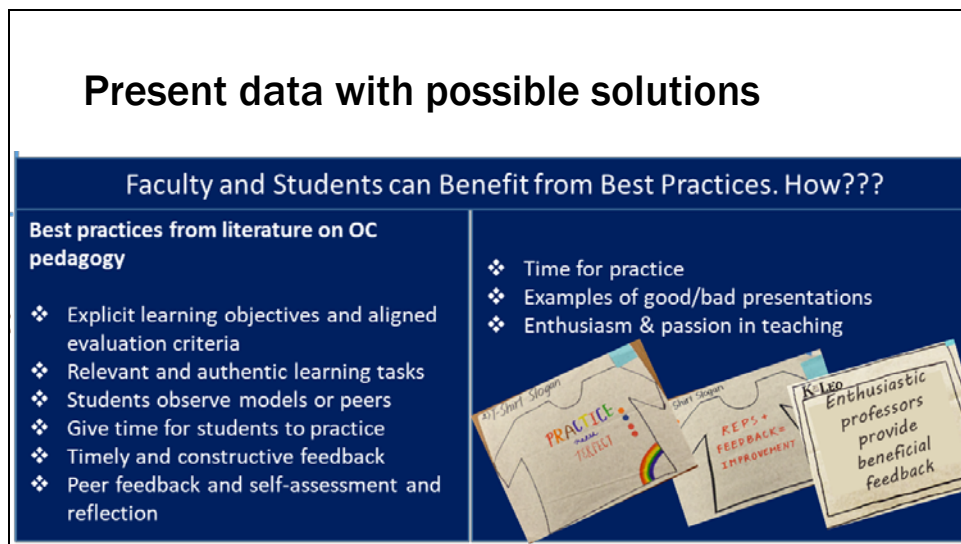
Through this prioritization task, the committee identified quantitative reasoning and civic engagement as the priority areas to take actions to improve. The committee later developed an action plan.

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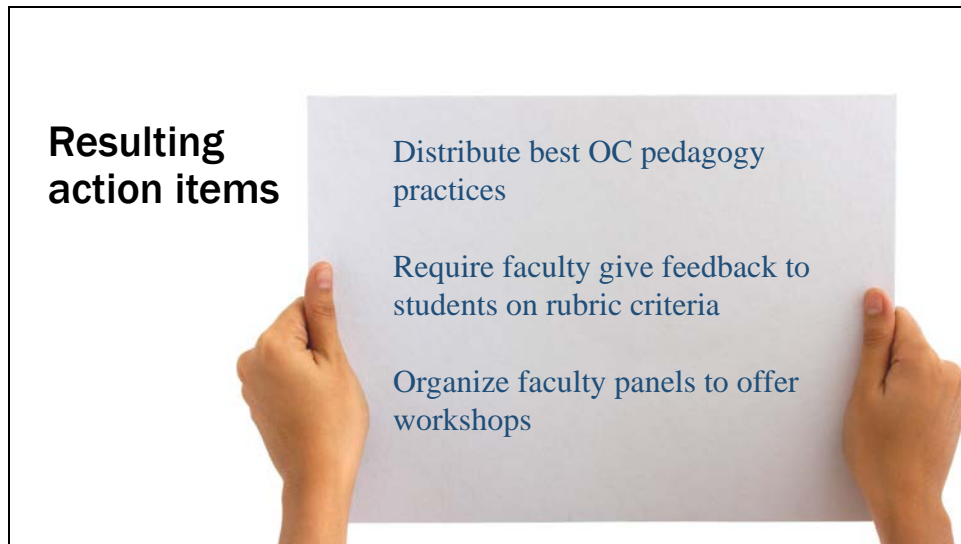


This is an infographics that I prepared and presented at a general education committee meeting. Again, I sent out the results before the meeting, only used the five minutes to present the data, which included the present and past data to tell a story—*“We are doing okay and we can improve. Our efforts make a difference in student learning.”*

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Together with the results, I provided best practices in oral communication pedagogy and student voices in what help them learn. Providing possible solutions when presenting data is very effective in helping faculty make educated decisions to use results.



As the result of the facilitation, the committee members came up with a variety of ways to enhance oral communication teaching and learning. They decided to (1) distribute best OC pedagogical strategies in the OC course-designation request form; (2) revise the OC designation requirement to encourage faculty to use the rubric criteria to provide students feedback; and (3) organize a faculty panel to offer OC teaching workshops in the future.

**How many strategies have sparked your thoughts?**

1. Meta analysis to find status and examples
2. Communicate and showcase excellence
  - a) Workshop
  - b) Poster
  - c) Excellent Use-of-Assessment Map
  - d) Let them present to campus
  - e) Give award
  - f) Publicize on YouTube
3. Package low-hanging fruit
4. Training on facilitating discussion on use
5. Intensive training to build a “use assessment” mindset
6. Facilitate use-of-results yourself